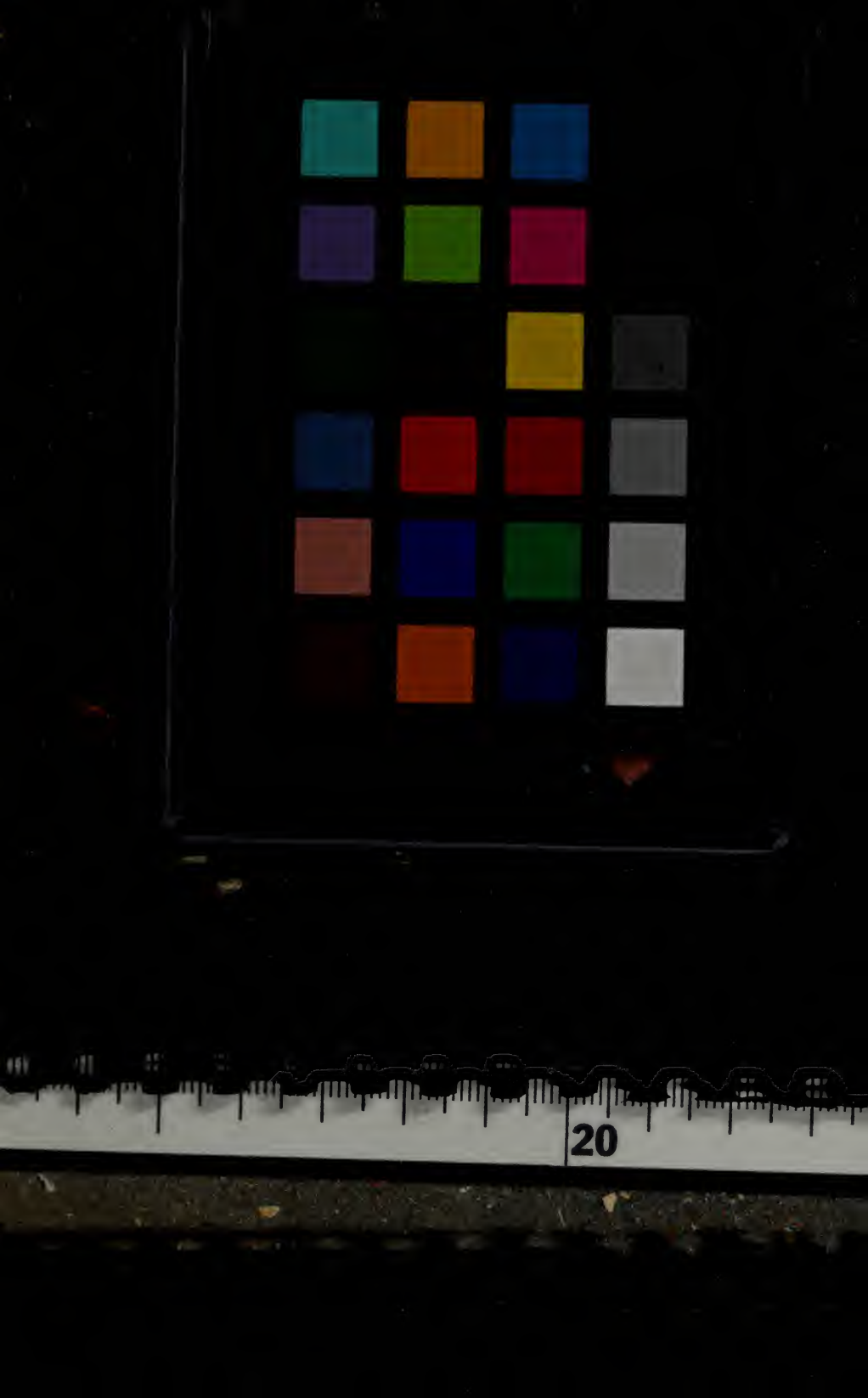
20

WERE ADAM & EVE OUR FIRST PARENTS?

BY "ICONOCLAST."

THIS question, Were Adam and Eve our first parents? is indeed one of most grave importance. If the answer be a negative one, it is, in fact, a denial of the whole scheme of Christianity. The Christian theory is that Adam, the common father of the whole human race, sinned, and that by his sin he dragged down all his posterity to a state from which redemption was needed. and that Jesus is, and was, the Redeemer, by whom all mankind are and were saved from the consequences of the fall of Adam. If Adam therefore be proved not to be the first man, if it be shown that it is not to Adam the various races of mankind are indebted for their origin, then the whole hypothesis of fall and redemption is dissipated.

In a pamphlet like the present, it is impossible (even if I possessed the ability, which I do not) to attempt to give any statement and analysis of the various hypotheses as to the origin of the human race. I frankly admit, that my only wish and intent is, to compel people to examine the Bible record for themselves, instead of making it their fetish, bowing down before it without thought. I am inclined to the opinion that the doctrine of a plurality of sources for the various types of the human race is a correct one. That wherever the conditions for life have been found, there also has been the degree of life resultant on those conditions. My purpose in this essay is not to demonstrate the correctness of my own thinking, but rather to illustrate the incorrectness of the Genesiacal teaching. Were Adam and Eve our first parents? On the one hand an answer in the affirmative to this question can be obtained from the Bible, which asserts Adam and Eve to be the first man and woman made by God, and fixes the date of their making about 6,000 years, little more or less, from the present time. On the other hand, it seems to me that science emphatically declares man to have existed on the earth for a far more extended period, affirms that as far as we can trace man, we find him in isolated groups, diverse in type, till we lose him in the ante-historic period; and with nearly equal distinctness, denies that the various existing races find their common parentage in one pair. It is only on the first point that I attack the Bible chronology of man's existence. I am aware that compilations based upon the authorised version of the Old Testament Scriptures are open to objection, and that while from the Hebrew, 1656 years represent the period from Adam to the Deluge generally acknowledged, the Samaritan Pentateuch only yields for the same period 1307 years, while the Septuagint version furnishes 2242

1-64

years; there is, I am also informed, on the authority of a most erudite Egyptologist, a fatal objection to the Septuagint chronology—*i.e.*, that it makes Methusaleh outlive the Flood.*

The deluge occurred, according to the Septuagint, in the year of the world 2242, and by adding up the generations previous to his (Methusaleh's.)

Adam	230
Seth	205
Enos	190
Cainan	170
Mahaleel	165
Jared	162
Enoch	165
	1287

We shall find that he was born in the year of the world 1287. He lived 969 years, and therefore died in 2256. But this is 14 years after the deluge.

The Rev. Dr. Lightfoot, who wrote about 1644, fixes the month of the creation at September, 5572 years preceding the date of his book, and says that Adam was expelled from Eden on the day on which he was created.† In the London 'Ethnological Journal,' for which I am indebted to the kindness of its Editor, an able ethnologist and careful thinker, the reader will find a chronology of Genesis ably and elaborately examined. At present, for our immediate purpose, we will take the ordinary English Bible, which gives the following result:—

From Adam to Abraham (Genesis v. and xi.)	2008
From Abraham to Isaac (Gen. xxi. 5)	100
From Isaac to Jacob (Gen. xxv. 26)	60
From Jacob going into Egypt (Gen. xlvii. 9)	130
Sojourn in Egypt (Exodus xii. 41)	430
Duration of Moses's leadership (Exodus vii. 7, xxxi. 2) ...	40
Thence to David, about	400
From David to Captivity, 14 generations (27), about 22 reigns	473
Captivity to Jesus, 14 generations, about	593
	4234
Less disputed 230 years of sojourn in Egypt	230
	4004

From Adam to Abraham the dates are certain, if we take the Bible statement, and there is certainly no portion of the orthodox text, except the period of the Judges, which will admit any considerable extension of the ordinary Oxford chronology.

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* Sharpe's History of Egypt, page 196.

† Harmony of the Four Evangelists, and Harmony of the Old Testament.

The Book of Judges is not a book of history. Everything in it is recounted without chronological order. It will suffice to say, that the cyphers which we find in the book of Judges, and in the first book of Samuel, yield us, from the death of Joshua to the commencement of the reign of Saul, the sum total of 500 years, which would make, since the exode from Egypt, 565 years; whereas the first book of Kings counts but 480 years, from the going out of Egypt down to the foundation of the temple under Solomon. According to this we must suppose that several of the judges governed simultaneously.*

In reading Alfred Maury's profound essay on the classification of tongues, I was much struck with the fact that he, in his philological researches, traces back some of the ancient Greek mythologies, to a Sanscrit source. He has the following remark, worthy of earnest attention:—"The God of Heaven, or the sky, is called by the Greeks *Zeus Pater;* and let us have notice that the pronunciation of Z resembles very much that of D, inasmuch as the word Zeus becomes in the genitive *Dios.* The Latins termed the same God, *Dies-piter*, or Jupiter. Now in the Veda, the God of Heaven is called Dyashpitai." What is this, but the original of our own Christian God, the father, the יהוה (*Jeue*) *pater* of the Old Testament? I introduce this remark for the purpose of shaking a very commonly entertained opinion, that the Hebrew Records, whether or not God inspired, are at any rate the most antique, and are written in a primitive tongue. Neither is it true that the Hebrew mythology is the most ancient, nor the Hebrew language the most primitive; on the contrary, the mythology is clearly derived, and the language in a secondary or tertiary state.

What is the value of this Book of Genesis, which is the sole authority for the hypothesis that Adam and Eve, about 5,865 years ago, were the sole founders of the peoples now living on the face of the earth? Written we know not by whom, we know not when, and we know not in what language. If we respect the book, it must be from its internal merits; its author is to us unknown. Eusebius, Chrysostom, and Clemens Alexandrinus alike agree that the name of Moses should not stand at the head of Genesis as the author of the book. As to its internal merit, Origen did not hesitate to declare the contents of the first and second chapters of Genesis to be purely figurative. Our translation of it has been severely criticised by the learned and pious Bellamy, and by the more learned and less pious Sir William Drummond. Errors almost innumerable have been pointed out, the correctness of the Hebrew text itself questioned, and yet this book is an unerring guide to the students of ethnology. They may do anything, everything, except stray out of the beaten track. We have, therefore, on the one hand, an anonymous book, which indeed does not take you back so much as 6,000 years, for at least 1,600 years must be deducted for the Noachian deluge, when the world's inhabitants were again reduced to one family, one race, one type. On the other hand, we have now existing Esquimaux men, of the Arctic realm—Chinamen, of the Asiatic realm—Englishmen, of the European realm—Sahara negroes, of the African realm—Fuegians, of the American realm—New Zealanders, of the Polynesian realm—the Malay, representative of the realm which bears his name—the

* Munks' Palestine, page 231.

1.66

Tasmanian, of the Australian realm, with other families of each realm, too numerous for mention here; dark and fair, black-skinned and white-skinned, woolly-haired and straight-haired; low forehead, high forehead; Hottentot limb, Negro limb, Caucasian limb. Do all these different and differing structures and colours trace their origin to one pair? To Adam and Eve, or rather to Noah and his family? Or are they (the various races) indigenous to their nature, soils, and climates? And are these various types naturally resultant, with all their differences, from the differing conditions for life persistent to and consistent with them?

The question, then, really is this—Have the different races of man all found their common parent in Noah, about 4,300 years ago? Assuming the unity of the races or species of men now existing, there are but three suppositions on which the diversity now seen can be accounted for:—

"1st. A miracle or direct act of the Almighty, in changing one type into another.

"2nd. The gradual action of physical causes, such as climate, food, mode of life, &c.

"3rd. Congenital or accidental varieties."*

We may fairly dismiss entirely from our minds the question of miracle. Such a miracle is nowhere recorded in the Bible, and it lies upon any one hardy enough to assert that the present diversity has a miraculous origin, to show some kind of reasons for his faith, some kind of evidence for our conviction, and until this is done we have no reason to dwell on the first hypothesis.

Of the permanence of type under its own climatic conditions—that is, in the country to which it is indigenous—we have overwhelming proof in the statue of an ancient Egyptian scribe, taken from a tomb of the fifth dynasty, 5,000 years old, and precisely corresponding to the Fellah of the present day.† The sand had preserved the colour of the statuette, which, from its portrait-like beauty, marks a long era of art-progress preceding its production. It ante-dates the orthodox era of the flood, carries us back to a time when, if the Bible were true, Adam was yet alive, and still we find before it kings reigning and ruling in mighty Egypt. Can the reader wonder that these facts are held to impeach the orthodox faith?

On the second point Dr. Nott writes, "It is a commonly received error that the influence of a hot climate is gradually exerted on successive generations, until one species of mankind is completely changed into another. . . . This idea is proven to be false. . . . A sunburnt cheek is never handed down to succeeding generations. The exposed parts of the body are alone tanned by the sun, and the children of the white-skinned Europeans in New Orleans, Mobile, and the West Indies are born as fair as their ancestors, and would remain so if carried back to a colder climate.‡

Pure negroes and negresses, transported from Central Africa to England, and marrying among themselves, would never acquire the characteristics of the Caucasian races; nor would pure Englishmen and Englishwomen,

* "Types of Mankind," Dr. Nott, p. 57.
† M. Pulzsky on Iconography—"Indigenous Races," p. 111.
‡ "Types of Mankind," p. 58.

167

emigrating to Central Africa, and in like manner inter-marrying, ever become negroes or negresses. The fact is, that while you don't bleach the colour out of the dark-skinned African by placing him in London, you bleach the life out of him; and *vice versa* with the Englishman.* For a long time there has been ascribed to man the faculty of adapting himself to every climate. The following facts will show the ascription a most erroneous one:—"In Egypt the austral negroes are, and the Caucasian Memlooks were, unable to raise up even a third generation; in Corsica French families vanish beneath Italian summers. Where are the descendants of the Romans, the Vandals, or the Greeks in Africa? In Modern Arabia, 1830 years after Mahomed Ali had got clear of the Morea war, 18,000 Arnaots (Albanians) were soon reduced to some 400 men. At Gibraltar, in 1817, a negro regiment was almost annihilated by consumption. In 1841, during the three weeks on the Niger, 130 Europeans out of 145 caught African fever, and 40 died; out of 158 negro sailors only eleven were affected, and not one died. In 1809 the British expedition to Walchereen failed in the Netherlands through marsh fever. About the same time, in St. Domingo, about 15,000 French soldiers died from malaria. Of 30,000 Frenchmen, only 8,000 survived exposure to that Antillian island; while the Dominicanized African negro, Toussaint l'Overture, retransported to Europe, was perishing from the chill of his prison in France."

On the third point we again quote Dr. Nott:—

"The only argument left, then, is that of congenital varieties or peculiarities, which are said to spring up and be transmitted from parent to child, so as to form new races. Let us pause for a moment to illustrate this fanciful idea. The negroes of Africa, for example, are admitted not to be offsets from some other race which have been gradually blackened and changed in a moral and physical type by the action of climate; but it is asserted that 'once, in the flight of ages' some genuine little negro, or rather many such, were born of Caucasian, Mongol, or other light-skinned parents, and then have turned about and changed the type of the inhabitants of a whole continent. So in America, the countless aborigines found on this continent, which we have reason to believe were building mounds before the time of Abraham, are the offspring of a race changed by accidental or congenital varieties. Thus, too, old China, India, Australia, Oceana, &c., all owe their types, physical and mental, to congenital and accidental varieties, and are descended from Adam and Eve! Can human credulity go farther, or human ingenuity invent any argument more absurd?"

But even supposing these objections to the second and third suppositions set aside, there are two other propositions which, if affirmed, as I believe they may be, entirely overthrow the orthodox assertion:—"That Adam and Eve, six thousand years ago, were the first pair; and that all diversities now existing must find their common source in Noah—less than four thousand three hundred years from the present time." These two are as follows:—

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* 'Indigenous Races of the Earth,' p. 458. The alleged discovery of white-skinned negroes in Western Africa does not affect this question, it is not only to the colour of the skin but also the general negro characteristics that the above remarks apply.

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1. That man may be traced back on the earth long prior to the alleged Adamic era.

2. That there are diversities traceable as existing amongst the human race four thousand five hundred years ago, as marked as in the present day.

To illustrate the position that man may be traced back to a period long prior to the Adamic era, we refer our readers to the chronology of the late Baron Bunsen, who, while allowing about 2,2000 years for man's existence on earth, fixes the following dates, after a patient examination of the Nilotic antiquities:—

Egyptians under a republican form	10,000 B.C.
Ascension of Bytis, the Theban, 1st Priest King	9085
Elective Kings in Egypt	7230
Hereditary Kings in Upper and Lower Egypt, a double empire, form	5143*

The assertion of such an antiquity for Egypt is no modern hypothesis. Plato puts language into the mouth of an Egyptian, first claiming in that day an antecedent, 10,000 years for painting and sculpture in Egypt. This has long been regarded as fabulous because it was contrary to the Hebrew Chronology.

If this be the result of the researches into Egyptian archæology, the reader will scarcely be surprised to find me endeavouring from other sources to get corroborative evidence of a still more astonising character.

There are few who now pretend that the whole *creation* (?) took place 6000 years ago, although if it be true that God made all in six days, and man on the sixth, then the universe would only be more ancient than Adam by some five days. To state the age of the earth at 6000 years is simply preposterous, when we ascertain that it would require about 4,000,000 of years for the formation of the fosiliferous rocks alone, and that 15,000,000 of years have been stated as a moderate estimate for the antiquity of our globe. The deltas of the great rivers afford corroboration to our position as to man's duration. The delta of the Nile, formed by immense quantities of sedimentary matter, which in like manner is still carried down and deposited, has not perceptibly increased during the last 3000 years. "In the days of the earliest Pharoahs, the delta, as it now exists, was covered with ancient cities and filled with a dense population, whose civilization must have required a period going back far beyond any date that has yet been assigned to the deluge of Noah, or even to the creation of the world."†

From borings which have been made at New Orleans to the depth of 600 feet, from excavations for public works, and from examinations in parts of Louisiana, where the range between high and low water is much greater than it is at New Orleans, no less than 10 distinct cypress forests divided from each other by eras of aquatic plants, &c., have been traced, arranged vertically above each other, and from these and other data it is estimated by Dr. Benet Dowler, that the age of the delta is at least 158,000

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* Nott and Gliddon, "Indigenous Races," page 587.

† Gliddon's "Types of Mankind," page 335.

169

years, and in the excavations above referred to, human remains have been found below the further forest level, making it appear that the human race existed in the delta of the Mississippi more than 57,000 years ago.*

It is further urged, by the same competent writer, that human bones discovered on the coast of Brazil near Santas, and on the borders of a lake called Lagoa Santa, by Captain Elliott and Dr. Lund, thoroughly incorporated with a very hard breccia, every one in a fossil state, demonstrate that aboriginal man in America antedates the Mississippi alluvia, and that he can even boast a geological antiquity, because numerous species of animals have become extinct since American humanity's first appearance.†

With reference to the second point as to the possibility of tracing back the diversities of the Human Race to an antediluvian date, it is amply sufficient to point on the one side to the remains of the American Indian disentombed from the Mississippi forests, and on the other to the Egyptian monuments, tombs, pyramids, and stuccoes, revealing to us Caucasian men, and Negro-men, their diversities as marked as in the present day. Sir William Jones, in his day, claimed for Sanscrit literature a vast antiquity, and asserted the existence of the religions of Egypt, Greece, India, and Italy, prior to the Mosaic era. So far as Egypt is concerned, the researches of Lepsius, Bunsen, Champollion, Lenormant, Gliddon, and others, have fully verified the position of the learned president of the Asiatic Society.

We have Egyptian statutes of the third dynasty, going back far beyond the 4,300 years, which would give the orthodox era of the deluge, and taking us over the 4,500 years fixed by our second proposition. The fourth dynasty is rich in pyramids, tombs, and statues; and according to Lepsius, this dynasty commenced 3,426 B.C., or about 5,287 years from the present date.

In reading a modern work on the orthodox side,‡ I have been much pained by the constant assumption that the long chronologists must be in error, because their views do not coincide with orthodox teachings. Orthodox authors treat their heterodox brethren as unworthy of credit, because of their heterodoxy. The writer asserts§ that the earliest reference to the Negro tribes is in the era of the 12th dynasty. Supposing for a moment this to be correct, I ask what even then will be the state of the argument? The 12th dynasty, according to Lepsius, ends about 4,000 years ago. The orthodox chronology fixes the deluge about 300 years earlier. Will any sane man argue that there was sufficient lapse of time in three centuries for the development of Caucasian and Negro man from one family?

The fact is, that we trace back the various types of man now known, not to one centre, not to one country, not to one family, not to one pair, but we trace them to different centres, to distinct countries, to separate families, probably to many pairs. Wherever the conditions for life are found, there are living beings also. The conditions of climate, soil, &c., of Central Africa, differ from those of Europe. The indigenous races of Central Africa, differ from those of Europe.

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* "Types," pages 336 to 369.

† "Types," pages 350 and 357.

‡ "Archaia," by Dr. Dawson.

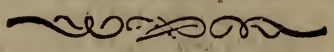
§ "Archaia," page 306.

1-70

Without pretending, in the present limited essay, to do more than index some of the most prominent features of the case, I yet hope that enough is here stated to interest my readers in the prosecution of future inquiry, upon the important question which serves as the title to these pages. I put forward no knowledge from myself, but am ready to listen to the teachings of wiser men; and while I shrink from the ordinary orthodox assertion of Adamic unity of origin, accompanied as it is by threats of pains and penalties if rejected, I am yet ready to receive it, if it can be presented to me associated with facts, and divested of those future hell-fire torments and present societarian persecutions which now form its chief, if not sole, supports.

The rejection of the Bible account of the peopling of the world involves also the rejection, as has been already remarked, of the entire scheme of Christianity. According to the orthodox rendering of both New and Old Testament teaching, all men are involved in the curse which followed Adam's sin. But if the account of the Fall be mythical, not historical; if Adam and Eve—supposing them to have ever existed—were preceded on the earth by many nations and empires, what becomes of the doctrine that Jesus came to redeem mankind from a sin committed by one who was not the common father of all humanity?

Reject Adam, and you cannot accept Jesus. Refuse to believe Genesis, and you cannot give credence to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul. The Old and New Testaments are so connected together, that to dissolve the union is to destroy the system. The account of the Creation and Fall of Man is the foundation-stone of the Christian Church—if this stone be rotten, the superstructure cannot be stable. It is therefore most important, that those who profess a faith in Christianity should consider facts which so vitally and materially affect the creed they hold.



1.71